

**TRIOZA ALACRIS FLOR (HEMIPTERA), A GALL-CAUSING
PYSLLID NEW TO IRELAND**J.P. O'CONNOR¹, P. ASHE², S. WISTOW³¹*National Museum of Ireland, Dublin 2, Ireland.*²*Research Associate, Department of Zoology, University College, Dublin 4, Ireland.*³*"Derrymore", Coliemore Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, Ireland.*

ON 23 SEPTEMBER 1996, JPOC noticed numerous unusual-looking galls on a small (2m) bay laurel *Laurus nobilis* L. growing in the front garden of a house on Essex Road, Dublin City (01632). The margins of the leaves were thickened and rolled downwards. One of the galls was collected. Using Stubbs (1986), it was identified as being caused by a psyllid, *Trioza alacris* Flor. Since this species had not been recorded previously from Ireland, JPOC returned to the tree on 25 September 1996 and obtained additional material. Galls were also discovered on a tree in a neighbouring garden and on the next day, a further infestation was noted on Pembroke Road (01732), some half a kilometre distant. Subsequently on 6 October 1996, galls were found on a bay laurel in the Zoological Gardens, Dublin (01235), *circa* five kilometres away from the original discovery. In all these instances, the trees were large and the galls scarce.

The collected galls were carefully opened and numerous nymphs of *T. alacris* were obtained. Adults (male and female) of *T. alacris* were also discovered. The material was determined using Hodkinson and White (1979) and White and Hodkinson (1982). Syrphid larvae were present within several of the galls where they had eaten nearly all the contained nymphs. They were identified as belonging to either *Syrphus ribesii* (L.) or *S. vitripennis* Meigen using Rotheray (1989). Both these species also attack aphids.

The discovery of *T. alacris* in Ireland is very interesting. The species is widely distributed throughout Europe and also occurs in the Crimea and Georgia. It was introduced into Great Britain in the early 1920s where it is now locally common in nurseries and gardens in southern England, extending northwards to North Wales (Hodkinson & White, 1979). It is considered a pest species and has the common name of Bay Sucker. Young plants are most susceptible and when heavily infested, leaves shrivel and fall prematurely. Shoots also die (Buczacki & Harris, 1983). *T. alacris* is also a pest in North America where it was first reported in 1911. As nearly as can be determined, it was introduced on nursery stock that had originated in Belgium (Johnson & Lyon, 1988). The species is also reported to have been introduced into Argentina and Chile. In Italy, the species has two to five generations per year and the adult overwinters on its hostplant (Ossiannilsson, 1992). However in Britain, there is only one adult generation each year (Hodkinson & White, 1979; Buczacki & Harris, 1983).

Undoubtedly, the species has been brought into Ireland on imported plants, probably during recent times.

Voucher specimens have been deposited in the National Museum of Ireland.

Acknowledgements

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Hazards of butterfly collecting – the lost sheep, Ghana, August 1996

In August 1996 I did something that I never, ever, thought I would do. I led a 14-strong tour-group through Ghana. Not just any old tour-group, mind you, but one of dedicated American entomologists. Our friends in London were laying bets on the odds of my coming back with my sanity intact. But the Ghana Wildlife Department was very keen on the first ever eco-tourism tour to Ghana, so when the call came, I had to respond. After all . . . I had first suggested the idea some three years ago in order to establish my street credibility with the Department. The old World War One recruitment poster materialised in front of my eyes, with the Director (Gerry Punguse, *aka* Bushman number one) in the place of Lord Kitchener; "Ghana conservation needs YOU!".

So there I was, at Accra Airport, to receive my group, British Airways contriving to bring them in seven hours late. An inauspicious start.

But things looked up. We had a fine hotel. The first day in Aburi Botanical Gardens went well. The second day on the Atewa Range at Kibi was sensational. Any visit to the Atewa forests is sensational, since it is one